Biography of Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai
Chairperson of the 8th Central Pay Commission

Justice **Ranjana Prakash Desai** is a distinguished Indian jurist, retired judge of the **Supreme Court of India**, and a respected public servant. In **2025**, she was appointed as the **Chairperson of the Eighth Central Pay Commission (8th CPC)** — becoming the **first woman in India to lead a Central Pay Commission**.

Justice Ranjana Desai
(Chairperson)

1. Early Life and Family Background

Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai was born on **30 October 1949** in **Mumbai, Maharashtra, India** — one of India's largest and most vibrant cities.

She was born into a family with a strong connection to the law. Her father, **S. G. Samant**, was a well-known criminal lawyer who practiced law and inspired her early interest in justice and the legal profession.

Justice Desai is married to **Prakash Desai**, and she has contributed to her community and the Indian legal system throughout her life and career.

2. Education and Early Training

Justice Desai's educational journey began in Mumbai:

- **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)** – Elphinstone College, Mumbai (1970)
- **Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.)** – Government Law College, Bombay (1973)

After completing her law degree, she began her legal career at a time when few women were practising law in India.

3. Beginning of Legal Career (1973–1986)

Justice Desai enrolled as an advocate on **30 July 1973**, beginning her professional legal career. In her early years as a lawyer, she worked:

- With **Justice Pratap** (then a lawyer) in his chambers
- Alongside her father **S. G. Samant**, gaining experience in **civil and criminal law cases**

In **1979**, she was appointed **Government Pleader (Appellate Side)** in the High Court of Bombay and handled important government cases. Her sharp legal skills and dedication earned her more responsibilities.

In **1986**, she was appointed **Special Public Prosecutor** in cases involving preventive detention — a role that required deep understanding of law and public safety

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4. Judicial Career

Bombay High Court

Justice Desai was elevated to the bench as an **Additional Judge of the Bombay High Court** on **15 April 1996** and became a **Permanent Judge** in 1998. She served in this position for many years, making careful and respected judicial decisions.

Supreme Court of India

On **13 September 2011**, she became a **Judge of the Supreme Court of India**, the highest court in the country. Serving until **29 October 2014**, she was among the *few women judges* to have served on India's apex court.

During her time in the Supreme Court, Justice Desai contributed to many important judgments, especially in matters of constitutional, criminal, and civil law.

5. Roles After Retirement

Even after retirement from the Supreme Court in **2014**, Justice Desai continued to serve the nation in many important capacities:

Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (2014–2019)

Soon after retirement, she became **Chairperson of the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity**, where she addressed legal disputes involving electricity regulation and policy.

Advance Ruling Authority (Income Tax) (2018–2019)

She was appointed **Chairperson of the Advance Ruling Authority**, dealing with complex tax matters.

Search Committee for Lokpal Appointments

Justice Desai headed the **Search Committee** tasked with recommending names for members of the **Lokpal**, an institution for addressing corruption complaints against public servants.

Delimitation Commission (2020)

She became **Chairperson of the Delimitation Commission of India**, overseeing the sensitive and important task of redrawing electoral constituencies for fair representation.

Uniform Civil Code Committees (2024–2025)

Justice Desai also led committees to prepare draft laws for the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** in states like Uttarakhand and Gujarat — work that required careful balancing of law, society, and diversity

6. Chairperson of the 8th Central Pay Commission

In **October 2025**, the Government of India appointed Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai as the **Chairperson of the 8th**

Central Pay Commission (8th CPC) — the body responsible for reviewing and recommending changes to salaries, allowances, pensions, and service conditions of central government employees and pensioners.

Her appointment marked a **historic milestone**, as she became **the first woman ever to lead a Central Pay Commission in India**.

The Commission comprises three members, with **Prof. Pulak Ghosh** (IIM Bangalore) as Part-Time Member and **Shri Pankaj Jain** (IAS) as Member-Secretary. The Commission has been given **18 months to submit its final recommendations**.

Cabinet

Cabinet approves Terms of Reference of 8th Central Pay Commission

Posted On: 28 OCT 2025 3:03PM by PIB Delhi

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, today approved the Terms of Reference of 8th Central Pay Commission.

The 8th Central Pay Commission will be a temporary body. The Commission will comprise of one Chairperson; One Member (Part Time) and one Member-Secretary. It will make its recommendations within 18 months of the date of its constitution. It may consider, if necessary, sending interim reports on any of the matters as and when the recommendations are finalized. While making the recommendations the Commission will keep in view the followings:

i. The economic conditions in the country and the need for fiscal prudence;

ii. The need to ensure that adequate resources are available for developmental expenditure and welfare measures;

iii. The unfunded cost of non-contributory pension schemes;

iv. The likely impact of the recommendations on the finances of the State Governments which usually adopt the recommendations with some modifications; and

v. The prevailing emolument structure, benefits and working conditions available to employees of Central Public Sector Undertakings and private sector.

Background:

The Central Pay Commissions are periodically constituted to go into various issues of emoluments structure, retirement benefits and other service conditions of Central Government employees and to make recommendations on the changes required thereon. Usually, the recommendations of the pay commissions are implemented after a gap of every ten years. Going by this trend, the effect of the 8th Central Pay Commission recommendations would normally be expected from 01.01.2026.

The Government had announced formation of the 8th Central Pay Commission in January, 2025 to examine and recommend changes in the Salaries and other benefits of Central Government employees.

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7. Legacy and Recognition

Justice Desai is widely respected for:

- Her **integrity and fairness** as a judge
- Her ability to handle **complex legal and social issues**
- Her service in roles beyond the judiciary — in election administration, civil law reform, and public policy committees

Her leadership of the 8th CPC reflects the government's confidence in her **experience, judgment, and fairness** to address the needs of millions of government employees and pensioners across India.

8. Personal Traits and Values

Justice Desai is known for:

- **Strong commitment to justice**
- **Respect for rule of law**
- **Dedication to public service**
- **Efforts to ensure equality and fairness**

Her career spans over **five decades**, showing how perseverance, hard work, and integrity can lead to service at the highest levels of law and governance.

Conclusion

Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai's life is a remarkable journey from a young law student in Mumbai to becoming one of India's most respected jurists and public servants. Her appointment as the **Chairperson of the 8th Central Pay**

Commission is a proud moment — not only for her but also for millions of Indian government employees. Her story inspires confidence, respect, and hope that the 8th CPC's recommendations will be balanced, fair, and grounded in deep understanding of law and public welfare.